



# DOCCS TODAY

## From the Desk of the Acting Commissioner

Anthony J. Annucci

New York State Department of  
Corrections and Community  
Supervision



From time to time, the long-running television game show *Jeopardy!* will throw a curveball at contestants with a category called, “potpourri.” This is the show’s clever way of taking clues that have nothing to do with one another and putting them all in one place. As you pore over the pages of this edition of *DOCCS Today*, you’ll understand why “potpourri” is an appropriate way to describe the many triumphs and challenges that the Department has experienced in recent months.

There has been much to recognize, including Correction Officer graduations from the Albany Training Academy, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both Hudson Link and Puppies Behind Bars. We have honored the diversity within our Department by celebrating Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Special events have even resumed, with theater productions, concerts, and intercollegiate debates filling the auditoriums of facilities. Re-Entry Units across the state have hosted job fairs to benefit releasees in search of gainful employment and Community Supervision staff have dedicated their time and effort to career planning and job placement trainings initiated under the Governor’s Jails to Jobs initiative.

We cannot, however, ignore the difficulties the Department has simultaneously faced. Staff recruitment—from security to medical positions—has posed a major obstacle in daily operations. Violent conduct—especially against staff—has risen to alarming levels, both within our facilities and in the community. Legislation has continued to have an impact on the way staff are able to perform their duties.

Though, as we emerge from the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had some time to reflect on the impact it has had on us as individuals and as a Department. In the wake of this shared experience, we have checked in on colleagues and neighbors, and they have done the same for us. While things may never truly feel back to normal, through it all, amazing things have been accomplished by looking out for one another. It is my hope that you have seen it firsthand, just as you will see it chronicled in the pages ahead.

I would be remiss not to mention that this will be the last time I have the profound honor to address readers of *DOCCS Today*. After careful consideration, I have decided to retire after more than 38 years with the Department, effective August 11, 2023. It has been a privilege to oversee the Department for the last ten years and I have nothing but the utmost respect and appreciation for this agency and its incredible workforce. I believe that we are the best Corrections and Community Supervision agency in the country, and the men and women who work in our prisons and community supervision offices are truly unsung heroes.

# ***DOCCS Today***

***Spring 2023***

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## **WANT AN EVENT POSTED ON DOCCS SOCIAL MEDIA?**

For posting on social media, send your  
submissions to:

**[nicole.sheremeta@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:nicole.sheremeta@doccs.ny.gov)**

**[rachel.connors@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:rachel.connors@doccs.ny.gov)**

**[thomas.mailey@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:thomas.mailey@doccs.ny.gov)**



## **WANT AN EVENT INCLUDED IN *DOCCS Today*?**

Send your submissions for publishing in the  
next issue of *DOCCS Today* to:

**[nicole.sheremeta@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:nicole.sheremeta@doccs.ny.gov)**

**[rachel.connors@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:rachel.connors@doccs.ny.gov)**

**[thomas.mailey@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:thomas.mailey@doccs.ny.gov)**



**\*\*Please ensure all photo submissions are  
not scanned and are of staff adhering to  
COVID protocols, such as mask wearing.**

# DOCCS Highlights

Suicide Awareness For Law Enforcement Officers (SAFLEO) Training was hosted at DOCCS Central Office. DC Darren Miller presented opening remarks to the 88 participants who received training from instructors Brandon Post, Jeff Wood, George Mussini, and Michon Morrow.



## VICTIMS ASSISTANCE CENTER Newsletter

www.VACJC.COM  
SUMMER 2022



### 100 Campaign

Take the pledge today and sign up to become a 100 Campaign contributor. Money can be raised in many creative ways. Some can pay all at once, and others have in the past held mini fundraisers to get to their \$1,000 goal.

If you or your organization is passionate about preventing sexual assaults, domestic violence, and child abuse in our communities, please join us today. You will have until November 30th to complete your pledge.

CONTACT OUR DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, KRISTIN PROVEN AT  
KRISTINP@VACJC.COM OR CALL 315-755-1434 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

### CURRENT 2022 100 CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS

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JOHN & PAMELA MURTHA  
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ISABELLA COLELLO  
ERIN & MOLLY GARDNER

Cape Vincent Correctional Facility's "Make a Difference Day Committee" held a fundraiser, in collaboration with the Jefferson County Victims Assistance Center, to support the prevention of sexual assaults, domestic violence and child abuse. Because of the facility's charitable donation, they were recognized as a "100 Campaign Contributor" in the Victims Assistance Center's recent newsletter.

Altona Correctional Facility recognized six incarcerated individuals – M. Moore, J. Nival, M. Siddique, D. Ridley, W. Jordan and V. Thorton – for their completion of the Peer Education Program offered through The Alliance for Positive Health's Criminal Justice Services. The training prepared these individuals to become Peer Educators for other incarcerated individuals with the goal of creating awareness to reduce the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as the stigma associated with each.





# DOCCS Highlights



Community Supervision Elmira AO Bureau Chief Aaron Palm hosted a luncheon for Elmira and Binghamton Sub -AO staff to show appreciation for Women's History Month.

DOCCS was recognized by NYS SEFA's Adirondack Campaign for raising \$78,261 – making up 69.1% of the campaign contributions!



Riverview Correctional Facility Horticulture Instructor G. Parish and CO J. Bell delivered pumpkins grown at the facility to the Ogdensburg Knights of Columbus Hall and Fr. Martin Field where the Maple City Fall Festival was held.



The Executive Team at Sullivan Correctional Facility held an ice cream social for staff to show their appreciation for all they do.



DOCCS Acting Commissioner Annucci and his staff attended the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation Barbecue which provides support for the Second Chances programs at Walkill and Wyoming Correctional Facilities.



# DOCCS Highlights



Great Meadow CF and Washington CF participated in the Special Olympics. Employees of the facilities helped welcome over 1,500 athletes to the games. They also participated in the Ceremonial Run to help carry the Flame of Hope and light the cauldron to kick off the weekend.

Bishop LaValley of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg made a pastoral visit to Franklin Correctional Facility. LaValley offered Mass for Incarcerated Individuals of the Roman Catholic faith with a message to encourage those separated from society to look toward the future with hope and desire to make their lives better. A total of 14 incarcerated individuals attended this service along with Deacon Ryan McNulty of Central Office Ministerial and Family Services, members of the Exec Team and facility staff.



Groveland Correctional Facility's Imam Jafer Yasar had the honor of being a guest speaker at the Monroe County Naturalization Ceremony.



# DOCCS Donations

Hale Creek Correctional Facility's Make A Difference Day Committee collected donations from staff to contribute to the Domestic Violence Program in Fulton County.



Franklin Correctional Facility donated \$500 to the North Country Habitat for Humanity as part of the Make A Difference Day Campaign.



Wyoming's NYS Employee's Federal Appeal Committee donated \$4,500 to the local comfort care home. They also raised enough funds to purchase essential items for the "Gateway House", including food store gift cards, bottled water & cleaning supplies.



Hale Creek Correctional Facility's Make A Difference Committee collected donations from staff to sponsor four local kids' summer camp attendance at the Sacandaga Bible Conference Center.

Riverview Correctional Facility's Make a Difference Day Committee dropped off several bags of winter clothing to the Canton Neighborhood Center.





# DOCCS Donations

In conjunction with Altona Correctional Facility's Employee Benefit Fund, members of NYSCOPBA presented a check for \$1,327.50 to North Country Pink Heals to support local families battling cancer.



The Groveland Correctional Facility African American Association led a facility wide fundraiser to raise money for the citizens of Ukraine. The organization was able to raise \$1,311.50 to donate to the United Nations World Food Program's emergency response in the Ukraine.



In coordination with the Capital Region's local Food Bank and Greene Correctional Facility's annual "Giving Tree Program," the facility was given a "wish list" to purchase gifts for families who are suffering hardships. Not only was the Committee able to collect all of the gifts on the lists but they also raised an additional \$400.00 for extra items!



Riverview Correctional Facility's Make a Difference Day Committee collected and donated winter clothes for the many kids that attend after school activities at the Ogdensburg Boys & Girls Club.



Woodbourne Correctional Facility held their annual MLK food drive wherein staff collected and donated 75 pounds of food to the Sullivan County United Way.





# DOCCS Donations

Wende ILC donated \$500 to both the Ronald McDonald House and The Children's Hospital of Buffalo Foundation along with \$150 to both the American Legion and Veterans One-Stop Center of WNY—totaling a generous donation of \$1,500.



Adirondack Correctional Facility participated in an “Angel Tree” event in which they “adopted” a local family in need during the holidays. Staff collected and donated over 50 gifts to the family of six.



Altona Correctional Facility's Employee Benefit Fund and NYSCOPBA presented a check for \$2,405 and 63 toys to the North Country Health and Wellness Organization's “Operation Snowflake” campaign to help local families in need.



Bare Hill Correctional Facility's Make A Difference Day Committee held a “Holiday Helpers” Fund Raiser and a Toy Drive to raise money and provide a variety of items for community children in need. A “Giving Thanks” Basket (created/donated by MADD) was raffled off and raised \$773.25. Approximately \$3000 worth of toys and other items were dropped off by the Committee as well.





# DOCCS Donations

Collins Correctional Facility's Building Maintenance Class, instructed by Daren North, donated over a 100 pre-cut blue bird house kits to the WNY Safari Club who distributes the kits to various youth organizations to be used as educational projects.



Collins Correctional Facility's Make a Difference Day Committee held a Holiday Fundraiser for three families adopted through the Gowanda Central School District. The Committee and staff raised and donated over \$2500 in gifts.

Riverview Correctional Facility's Horticulture Program created Holiday Decorations to donate to the Ogdensburg Public School's Snack Pack Program Annual Holiday Auction.



Wyoming Correctional Facility's Diversity and Inclusion Committee held a fundraiser to honor Veterans and military personnel which raised \$160.00 for the Harder O'Donnell American Legion Post 734 in Attica, NY.



The Coxsackie Correctional Facility CERT team, NYSCOPBA and faculty made monetary and toy contributions to Toys for Tots.



# DOCCS Donations

Coxsackie Correctional Facility's NYSCOPBA union "adopted" local families suffering hardships to help make their Christmas a little brighter. The union provided the families with Christmas trees surrounded by presents. This act of kindness helped 14 children and six families. NYSCOPBA also used their fundraiser money to donate to Albany Medical Center for Children and Toys for Tots.



Albion Correctional Facility's Employee Benefit Fund Committee held a fundraiser wherein staff could wear their favorite sports team jerseys to raise money for Albion Community Action Food Pantry. Participation included a minimum of \$1 donation which was matched by the Committee. Uniformed staff, who were unable to alter their dress, were given the opportunity to bring in a food item. All who participated, were entered in a drawing for a \$100 gift card. The facility raised \$360 and donated two large bins of food to the food pantry.

Auburn Correctional Facility and the Auburn Police Department spread holiday cheer by performing "random acts of kindness". The organizations raised \$26,000 to carry out the "shop-with-a-cop" program and other numerous acts of kindness.



Shawangunk Correctional Facility held their annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Food Drive to provide vital assistance to members of the community during the long winter months. This year, donations were delivered to the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry in Walkill, NY.



# DOCCS Donations

As a way of giving back to the community, Great Meadow Correctional Facility's Make A Difference Day Committee donated \$1,000 to the Whitehall Central School Parent Teacher Association.



Hale Creek Correctional Facility's Make a Difference Day Committee collected donations to give Easter baskets to the residents at the Wells Nursing Home in Johnstown.



# Suicide Prevention Week

Great Meadow Correctional Facility went above and beyond during Suicide Prevention Week to raise awareness, improve staff wellness and provide resources for those interested. Throughout the week, staff managed a table in the front lobby of the facility where staff were offered the opportunity to sign up for wellness training, win a wellness basket complete with a gift certificate for a yoga studio, receive information specific to veterans and families, and take activities, such as puzzles, to enjoy in their free time. Fantastic work by Great Meadow to raise awareness and open the dialogue on such an important topic.



# Hispanic Heritage Month

DOCCS celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with a celebration that included great food, music and remarks from Acting Commissioner Annucci, NYS Chief Diversity Officer Julissa Gutierrez and NYS Secretary of State Robert Rodriguez.





# Native American Heritage Month

DOCCS held its first Native American Heritage Month celebration. EDC Martuscello provided remarks and introduced keynote speaker, retired DOCCS Native American Chaplain Thomas R. Porter, Mohawk Elder. The guest speaker was Nicole Thompson, DOCCS Native American Chaplain. The guests enjoyed Native American cultural performances and sampled traditional Native American food.



# Black History Month

DOCCS' theme for Black History Month was "Black Resistance." "...Black Resistance" honors the significant leaders who have fought to end the systemic segregation that has hindered social, educational, and economic opportunities for Black people, and to eliminate all forms of discrimination..." Thanks to our 2023 Black History Month Committee; Opening Remarks Speaker, Superintendent Linda Carrington-Allen; Interactive Presenter, Sergeant Leviah Davis; Keynote Speaker, Honorable Raymond L. Bruce and the many amazing performers, Central Office held a Black History Month event to acknowledge how far we have come in Black History but also how much more progress we need to achieve to become a fully diverse, inclusive and fair society.



Greene Correctional Facility's Diversity and Inclusion Committee was proud to host a Black History Day Celebration. The event included discussions about the contributions, culture and achievements of important people in Black history, as well as a trivia board game, giveaways and a free raffle for all staff.



# Women's History Month



The Month of March is designated as Women's History Month to recognize extraordinary women of all backgrounds who have made immeasurable contributions to society. This year, DOCCS presented awards to four remarkable women within the Department that highlighted four categories: Career Advancement, Education, Community and Organizational. Our award recipients included Assistant Deputy Superintendent of State Screening, Jennifer Santiago; Supervising Offender Rehabilitation Coordinator, Lindsey Cougler-Bouchey; Re-entry Manager, Detrel Howell and Regional Health Services Administrator, Ashley Welytok. The Department would like to thank Director of Human Resources, Kelly Ahearn; the astounding cultural performers; Poet, Carol Durant; Keynote Speaker, Alyssa Lotmore and The Women's History Month Committee for making this event possible. We could not be more gracious of the meaningful work and accomplishments that women in this Department have continually provided.



# National Correctional Officers and Employees Appreciation Week

In honor of National Correctional Officers and Employees Appreciation week, DOCCS acknowledged the efforts and services our staff provide every day to keep our system operating smoothly and efficiently. Despite the uncertainties DOCCS staff face daily, they continually show up, have each other's backs and play an integral role in ensuring this Department runs in a safe and secure manner. The gratitude we feel for the essential services our staff provide cannot be explained, or shown, in just one week; that's why even though their hard work is acknowledged within this week, it is appreciated all year round.





# Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV)

Thanks to ADS PREA Courtney Laliberte, staff at Mid-State, Marcy and Mohawk Correctional Facilities celebrated Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV), an event that honors the joy and resilience of trans and non-binary people everywhere. Owen Gilbo, Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 with NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation and Mid-State Correction Officer H. Nicholas, shared their individual experiences with staff in attendance. DOCCS is proud to announce that this was the very first TDOV event held for DOCCS staff and anticipates more events like these to express our alliance and support.



# Nurses Month

Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci attended a Nurses Day Celebration in Health Services to express his thanks to our hardworking nurses for their continued service and dedication. The ability to successfully address the incarcerated patient population within a correctional environment requires a great deal of skill and knowledge that is not typically required in most community health care settings. The theme “YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE” reflects that nurses are indispensable in safeguarding public health and continually play an integral role in the safety and wellness of our facilities each and every day!





# Harvest Now Projects

Each year, Hale Creek Correctional Facility's incarcerated individuals are given a variety of seeds to plant and care for in their outdoor plots. Upon collection, vegetables grown are locally donated; and this year, the zucchini were a big hit!



Franklin Correctional Facility grows and harvests thousands of pounds of fresh produce each year to be donated to local food pantries. This harvest was delivered to The Good Samaritan and The Moira Food Pantries of Northern New York. 871 pounds were already harvested and donated by the start of August!



Since 2017, Groveland Correctional Facility's Lifers Organization has worked to make a positive impact on the local community through their gardening program. The vegetable garden is maintained and harvested by members of the organization with 50% of the crops donated to local food banks. In total, the organization has donated more than 12,000 lbs. of produce since the program began, with its most recent donation going to the Mount Morris Senior Nutrition Center in Mount Morris, NY.



# Harvest Now Projects

Lakeview Correctional Facility harvested green peppers, banana peppers, tomatoes and sugar peas. A total of 281 pounds of fresh produce was harvested and donated to local food pantries.



Riverview Correctional Facility delivered their first load of vegetables to the local Ogdensburg Neighborhood Center Food Bank. The vegetables weighted over 225 pounds and consisted of peppers, tomatoes, celery, yellow squash, radishes, zucchini and a pumpkin. With this first delivery, the Department fulfilled its commitment to the local community following the announced closure of Ogdensburg Correctional Facility; namely, that another facility would step in and help out the food pantries there.

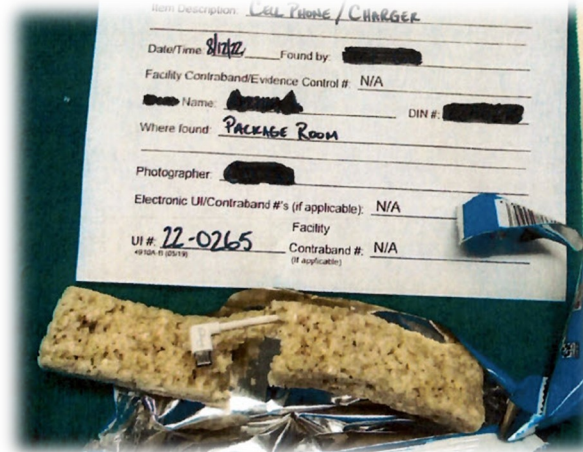
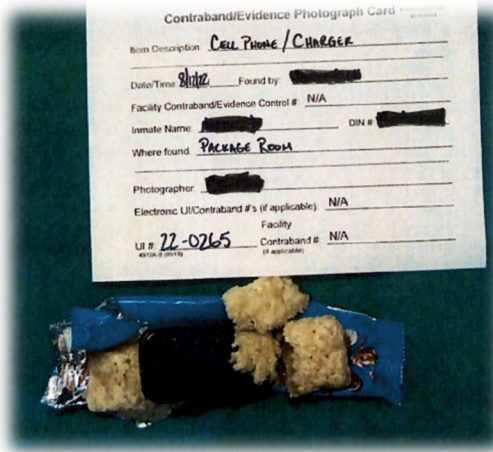


Riverview also delivered over 100 pumpkins to St. Lawrence County's Office of the Aging to be distributed throughout the county to seniors unable to obtain a pumpkin for the fall. D. Durant, St. Lawrence County Office of the Aging Meals Program Manager, accepted the delivery, fulfilling a fall tradition for North Country seniors. To date, over 7,000 pounds of vegetables grown by incarcerated individuals at Riverview Correctional Facility have been donated to several food banks in the county.

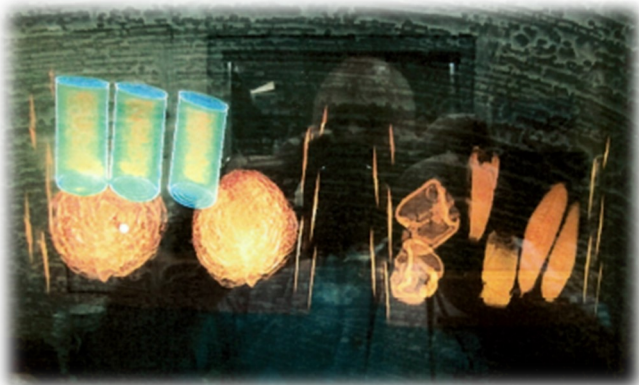


# Contraband Finds

We constantly thank alert facility staff, Office of Special Investigations Narcotics Investigators and K9 teams, and the NY State Police, who work together to hold individuals accountable for attempting to promote contraband within the facilities. Along with the pending charges, these individuals can face a visitation revocation to prevent any further attempts. These combined efforts contribute to safer facilities for everyone.



Greene Correctional Facility noticed inconsistencies within a box of Rice Krispies bars and discovered a cell phone and charging cable molded into the snacks.



Auburn Correctional Facility discovered 10 white ceramic razor blades, 511 sublingual film strips and 93 grams of a green leafy substance, both suspected to be drugs, inside hollowed out heads of fresh cabbage in two packages sent from friends and families.

Sing Sing Correctional Facility discovered several pouches of tuna that contained over 490 grams of a green leafy substance suspected to be drugs.



# Contraband Finds Cont'd

Over a two week period in September, there were 53 arrests made at facilities across the state with charges ranging from Promoting Prison Contraband, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance and/or Criminal Possession of Cannabis.



Franklin Correctional Facility discovered two packages containing contraband.



Contraband was recovered at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in an incarcerated individual's cell.





# Office of Special Investigations (OSI) Graduation

Acting Commissioner Annucci attended the Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) graduation of four new Canine Investigators and their dogs. The OSI Canine Training course is a six-week intensive training on illegal drug detection and related investigations for both the canine handlers and their dogs at the OSI Canine Training Center in Marcy, NY. The school is certified by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services. The efforts of the OSI Canine Unit help to keep staff and incarcerated individuals safe.

The OSI Canine Unit is now comprised of 26 investigators and senior investigators. In 2022, the OSI Canine Unit made over 350 arrests of visitors and 3 now-former Department employees, for attempting to smuggle illicit drugs or weapons into a state correctional facility. Contraband seized by OSI Canine Investigators included over 50 pounds of marijuana and synthetic cannabinoids, among an assortment of other illegal drugs, and 177 cutting weapons.



# Angel Tree Program

Groveland Correctional Facility hosted their first annual Angel Tree Parenting Presentation in collaboration with Prison Fellowship. The Angel Tree Program helps to provide a Christmas gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent with a personalized message. Field Director of Prison Fellowship, William Gallerani, explained the importance of parental involvement and identifying childhood experiences in order to overcome personal challenges. Formerly incarcerated father, Brian Gilbert, shared what he endured being separated from his child during his incarceration and emphasized that by engaging in programs, seeking community support for caregivers and children, and building upon social connections; you can succeed. The feedback from participants was outstanding and they were motivated to spread the message to peers and family!





# Canine Training Program

Albion Correctional Facility partnered up with community volunteer trainer, Dawn Spencer who has over 25 years of experience in dog training and is the owner of Eye of Oden K9 Training in Kent, NY. In collaboration with PAWS Animal Shelter, Albion welcomed three rescue dogs; Huey, Dewey and Louie. All of the puppies completed the 8 week training program with three teams of incarcerated individuals serving as their handlers. Dawn Spencer visited the facility once a week to put the puppies through the AKC S.T.A.R Puppy Program.



S.T.A.R. stands for Socialization, Training, Activity, and Responsible owner- the pillars of getting puppies off to a good start. The puppies graduated and were up for adoption through the following website: [paws14411.com](http://paws14411.com).

The Gouverneur Correctional Facility Veterans' Canine Program graduated their second set of dogs, Salsa; a Pit Bull Mix, and Madden; a Labradoodle. Veteran Canine Handlers provide basic obedience and socialization skills to the canines for eight to twelve weeks. Seven incarcerated individuals were their primary handlers who participated in weekly trainings with Community Trainer, Colleen Kilroy. Both Salsa and Madden have been adopted since graduation and are now in their forever homes. A big thanks to the Program, the trainers and the partnership with the Jefferson County SPCA!



# Flames

The Flames Youth basketball program, an historic all-volunteer non-profit that was created to offer inner-city youth a respite from the perils of the street, visited Otisville Correctional Facility for a friendly game of basketball with the population. Following the game, the men of Otisville spoke from the heart to the young players about real-life experiences and the consequences of one's choices. The non-profit was founded by Gerard Papa in 1974 and has bridged racial divides for thousands of inner-city families. They have won universal recognition from The White House, The New York Times, and 60 Minutes. For three generations, Flames basketball volunteers have directly mentored over 20,000 young men ages 8 – 22, from every race, ethnicity, neighborhood and national origin. Otisville Correctional Facility was proud to host this event and help mentor the youth, as they navigate their way through life.





# Recruitment Efforts

DOCCS recruiters were seen on-site at the Dutchess County Fair, Altamont Fair and The Great New York State Fair to teach others about the wide range of career opportunities within the Department.



Wende Correctional Facility's Deputy Superintendent of Programs Lewis Urban and Correction Officer Ayer secured a table at Alden's Bicentennial event to recruit future DOCCS candidates. Their efforts were successful as they obtained multiple individuals for interviews!



# Reentry Career Fairs



Over 20 employers participated in the Western Region Reentry Unit's first Job Fair – An opportunity for individuals currently on active supervision in Rochester and surrounding areas who could benefit from job readiness skills, information on local employers and obtaining gainful employment.

Eleven local businesses and 37 releasees were appreciative of the opportunity to be a part of Central New York Regional Office's first job fair held in Utica.



Over 100 Releasees and 10 employers participated in DOCCS Queens/Long Island Region Reentry Unit's job fair at the Queens Central Library.



Eighteen employers and community-based organizations serviced over 60 returning citizens with access to education, employment, apprenticeships and work readiness training opportunities at DOCCS Brooklyn Region Re-Entry Unit's Annual Employment Fair.



Fourteen employers and 85 releasees participated in DOCCS Bronx Reentry Unit's first Employment Fair.